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International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

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Agenda item 8
Comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Note verbale dated 19 January 2005 from the Permanent Mission of Mauritius to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mauritius to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Mauritius from 10 to 14 January 2005.

The Permanent Mission of Mauritius would be grateful if the attached communiqué of the Fifth Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Alliance of Small Island States, adopted on 12 January 2005, could be included in the report of the International Meeting as an annex (see annex).

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Annex to the note verbale dated 19 January 2005 from the Permanent Mission of Mauritius to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

COMMUNIQUE

Fifth Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)

Adopted at the Swami Vivekananda Convention Centre Port Louis, Mauritius, 12 January 2005.

1. The Heads of State and Government of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) met on 12 January 2005 in Port Louis, Mauritius. The meeting was chaired by The Honourable Paul Raymond Bérenger G.C.S.K, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius and was attended by the following Heads of State and Government: H.E The Rt. Hon. Owen S. Arthur, Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs of Barbados, H.E The Hon Jim Marurai, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, H.E Mr. Anote Tong, President of Kiribati, H.E Mr. Kessai H. Note, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, H.E Mr. Joseph J. Urusemal, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, H.E Mr. Ludwig Scotty, MP, President of Nauru, H.E Mr. Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis, H.E Hon Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegoai, Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Independent State of Samoa, H.E Mr. James A. Michel, President of the Republic of Seychelles, H.E Hon Sir Allan Kemakeza, Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, H.E Mr. Mari Alkatiri, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, H.E Mr. Maatia Toafa, Prime Minister of Tuvalu.

2. The meeting was also attended by the following Heads of Delegation of AOSIS member States: H.E Mr. Errol Cort, Minister of Finance and the Economy of Antigua and Barbuda, H.E The Hon. Mr. Marcus Bethel, Minister for Health and Environment of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, H.E Hon. John Briceno, Deputy Prime Minister of Belize, S.E.M. Maria Madalena Brito Neves, Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries of the Republic of Cape Verde, S.E Sr Ricardo Cabrisas Ruiz, Minister of Government of Cuba, H.E Hon Francis O. Riviere, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Marketing of Dominica, H.E Hon Mr. Kaliopate Tavola, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade of the Republic of the Fiji Islands, H.E Hon Ann Antoine, Minister for Health, the Environment and Ecclesiastic Affairs of Grenada, H.E Hon Dean Peart, MP, Minister for Land and Environment of Jamaica, H.E Hon Camsek Elias Chin, Vice-President of the Republic of Palau, H.E. Hon. Ferguson John, Minister for Physical Development, Environment and Housing of St. Lucia, H.E Mr. Douglas Slater, Minister for Health and Environment of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, H.E Hon Pennelope Beckles, Minister for Public Utilities and the Environment of Trinidad and Tobago, H.E Hon Sato Kilman, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Vanuatu, H.E Mr Mohamed Latheef, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Maldives to the United Nations, and the delegations of Guyana, Haiti, Singapore and Suriname.

3. The following special observers were also in attendance: H.E Mr. Fred M. Castro, Administrator, Guam Environmental Protection Agency, Ministry of Environment, Dr. Roland Antonius, Ministerial Adviser for the Council of Ministers of the Netherland Antilles, Mr. Rafael Subero-Collazo, Assistant Secretary of State for the Foreign Affairs of Puerto Rico, Dr. Carlyle Corbin, Minister of State for External Affairs of United States for External Affairs. Other attendees were Mr. Carlos J. Davila, Director of the Association of Caribbean States, H.E Mr. Edwin W. Carrington, Secretary General of the Caribbean Community, Ms. Len Ishmael, Director General of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, Mr. Greg Urwin, Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Mr. Asterio Takesy, Director of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, and Dr.

Russell Howorth, Deputy Director of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission. The Secretary General of the United Nations, the Secretary General of the International Meeting and the Under-Secretary General of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations also attended. A special report was delivered by Professor Albert Binger, University of the West Indies Center for Environment and Development.

4. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS in opening the Summit expressed condolences to the Governments and Peoples of those countries which suffered significant loss of life and damage from the 26 December 2004 earthquake and tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean region.

5. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS also expressed condolences to the Governments and Peoples of those countries affected by the 2004 hurricane, cyclone and typhoon season in the Caribbean and the Pacific and called on the international community to continue to support the reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts of those States.

6. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS reaffirmed the continued validity of the BPOA as the essential blueprint and fundamental framework for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). They recognized that poverty eradication and the enhancement of the quality of life of peoples, including their health, well-being and safety, as called for in the BPOA, must remain at the heart of the sustainable development aspirations of SIDS.

7. The Heads of State and Government further reaffirmed their continued commitment towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the other internationally agreed development goals, and the full implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Monterrey Consensus.

8. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS reiterated their deep commitment to the principles and aims of the BPOA. They noted, however, that although the special circumstances and vulnerabilities of SIDS were recognized and acknowledged at Rio and Barbados, much more needs to be done at the international level to assist SIDS in overcoming their unique problems.

9. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS recognized that SIDS themselves had borne most of the costs associated with the implementation of the BPOA but were constrained by the lack of resources, as well as deficiencies in institutional and human capacity and inadequate access to science and technology.

10. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS recognized that the BPOA is currently being implemented in a very different global environment from that prevailing at the time of its adoption in 1994. In this regard, they expressed concern that the social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities of SIDS have increased since the adoption of the BPOA.

11. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS expressed further concern that recent developments at the international level such as the 50% drop in Official Development Assistance (ODA) to SIDS, declining Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows to SIDS, the diversion of development resources to meet new security obligations, the graduation of SIDS from concessionary resources, and new trade rules all serve to further exacerbate their growing vulnerabilities.

12. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS reaffirmed their commitment to the Strategy for the further implementation of the BPOA and in this regard underscored that the International Meeting to adopt the Strategy was timely and of critical importance.

13. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS emphasized that the outcome of the International Meeting should *inter alia*, represent a renewal of international commitment to the sustainable

development of SIDS through the provision of the financial, technical and other forms of support required to help SIDS build resilience to address the constraints arising from their vulnerabilities. They further emphasized that the International Meeting should result in the entrenchment of the concept of the inherent vulnerability of SIDS into international discourse and ensure that this is taken into account in the development and execution of programmes of assistance provided by the multilateral development, finance and trade institutions.

14. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS recognized that the implementation of this Strategy, and sustainable development in general, also requires broad-based participation in policy formulation, decision making and implementation at all levels. They reaffirmed the need to continue to work for stable partnerships with all major groups, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

15. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS endorsed the "Buenos Aires AOSIS Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change" of 17 December 2004 and expressed grave concern that the adverse effects of climate change, climate variability, sea-level rise and associated phenomena such as the increase in the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events such as droughts, hurricanes, typhoons and cyclones, continue to threaten the sustainable development, livelihoods and existence of SIDS. The failure of countries, to reduce domestic greenhouse gas emissions means that the vulnerability of SIDS will continue to increase and that adaptation to climate change must continue to be a major priority for SIDS. They called on those States that have not done so, to ratify and fully implement the Kyoto Protocol, and for all States to take further urgent action to reduce domestic greenhouse gas emissions, including through the development and increased use of renewable energy. They further urged the international community to support SIDS in the development and implementation of national climate change action plans and strategies.

16. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS expressed concern at the increasing incidence and magnitude of natural disasters, such as the December 26, 2004 earthquake and tsunami, and the 2004 hurricane season in the Caribbean, and their devastating effect on the communities of SIDS. They called for the international community to support appropriate initiatives and mechanisms for strengthening national and regional capabilities for natural disaster prediction, prevention, and mitigation, as well as post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation. They recognized that the establishment and further development of early warning systems in all regions is a priority, and called for international support in this regard. They also called on the international community to take full advantage of the 10 year review of the Yokahama Strategy for Natural Disaster Reduction, to be held in Kobe, Japan from 18-22 January, 2005, to address the specific issues of SIDS including the possibility of establishing insurance and re-insurance arrangements for SIDS as they relate to natural and environmental disasters.

17. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS also reaffirmed their strong opposition to the transportation of radioactive materials through the Exclusive Economic Zones of SIDS, and recalled that the right to ban such movement and transportation within international law was formally accepted in the BPOA. They further reaffirmed that the most desirable solution to this problem was a total cessation of these movements through SIDS regions.

18. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS expressed concern at the serious negative impact that the erosion of trade preferences is having on the economies of SIDS, as well as the increased marginalisation of SIDS in the global economy. They highlighted the need for more effective SIDS representation in the various trade negotiating fora to continue to make the case for special and differential treatment.

19. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS called on the international community, in particular the distant water fishing nations to work with SIDS to develop their capacity to best manage their marine

resources in order to maximize the sustainable return for SIDS from these resources. They also called on the international community to support the efforts by SIDS to increase the level of local ownership and management of fisheries initiatives.

20. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS emphasized the value of increased cooperation among SIDS towards the implementation of the Strategy and achievement of their sustainable development.

21. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS in endorsing the SIDS Universities Consortium Initiative stressed the need for further capacity building measures in support of SIDS. In this regard, they called on the international community to provide new and additional resources in support of the SIDS resilience building proposal and the SIDS negotiating skills facility.

22. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS called on the UN System to enhance its support to SIDS. They expressed concern that the majority of posts in the SIDS unit and SIDS Net continue to be funded from voluntary resources and called for further strengthening of the SIDS Unit and SIDS Network (SIDSNET) as prescribed by the General Assembly in resolutions 57/261, 58/213 and 59/229 to enable the Unit to effectively fulfill its mandate.

23. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS noted the ongoing efforts being made to review the institutional arrangements for further strengthening of AOSIS as reflected in paragraph 13 of the Nassau Declaration and in this regard, encouraged the AOSIS working group established to consider this matter, to continue its work.

24. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS expressed their gratitude to H.E Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for attending the 5th AOSIS Summit and further expressed the need for the concerns of SIDS, highlighted during the course of the International Meeting, to be taken into account during the 2005 review of the MDGs.

25. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS expressed their appreciation to the Government and People of Mauritius for the warmth and hospitality extended in hosting the International Meeting and the AOSIS Summit.

26. The Heads of State and Government of AOSIS requested the Chairman to submit this Communique to the Secretary General for circulation as an official document of the International Meeting.